

SINO-PAK EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION UNDER INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF CPEC: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

The goal of the study paper is to highlight the value of education in Pakistan in light of CPEC where China and Pakistan cooperate in the domain of education especially under the institutional framework as given by CPEC. The research article is based on secondary material, including publications and research papers. The massive investment initiative known as CPEC has boosted Pakistan's socioeconomic growth. One important area that will be improved under CPEC is the education sector in Pakistan. Education cooperation between China and Pakistan has grown since the signing of the CPEC agreement in 2015. Beijing is providing Pakistani students with possibilities for academic and research collaboration, as well as scholarships, vocational training, and Chinese language classes. In order to give Pakistani youth chances in relevant disciplines and to clarify what is being done to deal with the issues of education in Pakistan and its link notably for employment in this massive economic investment, research on the educational component of this enterprise was emphasized.

1. Introduction

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) focuses on Pakistan's socioeconomic and educational development as well as the development of its oil and gas industry, seaports, industry, agriculture, and infrastructure. A flagship project known as "OBOR - ONE BELT, ONE ROAD" will be linked and expanded in order to reach markets in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East by land and sea. The strategic importance of Pakistan is the major objective of this project, which is significant for both China and America in the region (Hali, 2014). It is a need of this project to strengthen the economic and infrastructure shortcomings of member nations so that they can build solid foundations for this endeavor. This comprises educational development programs that prepare human resources, particularly young people, to meet current and future employment requirements. For the socio-economic development the goal is to assist Pakistan in modernizing its universities and other educational institutions in order to achieve international education standards for professional development (Ali, 2018).

The institutional framework of CPEC is designed to address all the major institutions and domains where China will collaborate with Pakistan. This include collaboration in the fields of energy, transportation, security, socio-economic development, agricultural cooperation, science and technology, infrastructure development, etc. Figure 1 illustrates the groups organized in the institutional framework of the CPEC.

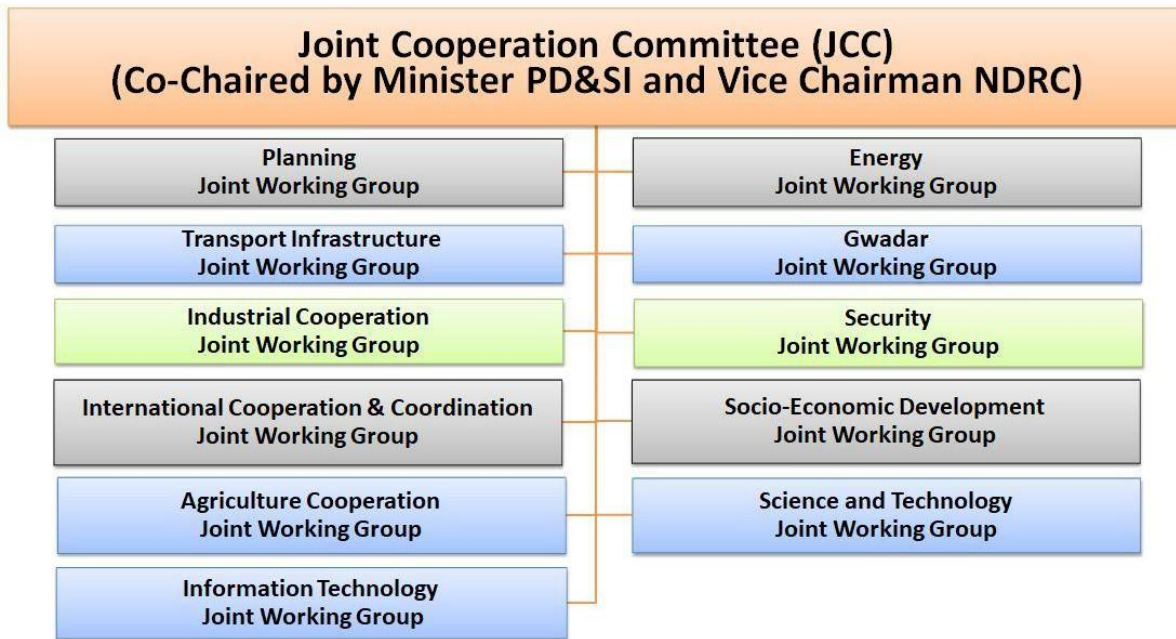


Figure 1: Institutional Framework of CPEC; Retrieved from: <https://cpec.gov.pk/institutional-framework/5>

The joint working groups for socio-economic development and science and technology will provide prospects for collaboration in the education sector. Under the socio-economic development, the new ventures for collaboration in the education sector are promoted.

Technical education has become the norm of the modern education system. Under these programs the capacity build-up of vocational and technical educational institutes is ensured. Moreover, the schools' equipment upgrading and renovation project are also initiated. There are also projects for smart classrooms in higher education, maintenance and renovation of 50 schools in newly merged districts, and overseas students' scholarships which are under construction (Authority, 2022).

In this secondary research, the data is gathered to analyze the cooperation between China and Pakistan in the domain of education as both of these nations have endeavored to support each other in various socio-political and economic domains. China is the developed country and one of the big powers on the world map, with the help of China, Pakistan would get assistance in the development of its own socio-economic sector. With the development of education sector, the economy of a nation gets a boost and these two indicators go hand in hand.

1.1. Background

Covid-19 has disrupted daily life throughout the world, having a negative impact on not just the economy but on various spheres of society, including education. In Pakistan, there are 211 accredited universities, 128 of which are public institutions. Owing to the lockdown, the world chose for online education, but Pakistani schools, colleges, and institutions lacked the model, infrastructure, or technology necessary for students to receive the needed education online. 400 classrooms are being developed for this smart education after China offered Pakistan \$200,000 in aid to assist in the development of this system (Uddin, 2020). To expand the capacity of remote learning, the first phase will see the completion of around 50 classes. As students had no choice but to study online in a socially isolating environment during the Covid-19 era, the significance of E-learning became clear. China, a major science and technology power, actively pushed this technology into the Pakistani educational system. As a

result of this need, just two universities—AIOU and Virtual University—operated online learning in Pakistan prior to the corona virus's spread; unlike the rest of developing nations, Pakistan had no other plans for this system. China proposed that it be updated to reflect new regulations and get familiar with the operational technology of digital learning.

As internet access is necessary for e-learning, Pakistan's current IT infrastructure has to be upgraded. High-quality optic fiber should also be installed, and since internet access is crucial for e-learning, it needs to be made as secure, safe, and affordable as possible (Uddin, 2020).

Shanghai Electric has helped Pakistan build numerous power projects through the Belt and Road Initiative and CPEC to help Pakistan address its shortcomings in this area. As is well known, many Pakistanis attend Chinese institutions in the hopes of obtaining employment in CPEC-related fields back home (Hussain, 2017). Similar to this, Shanghai Electric has started a new education program with the Confucius Institute at the University of Karachi for the employees of the Thar Block-1 Integrated Coal Mine and Power Project in order for the employee to further improve their skills under this program and obtain the necessary knowledge of Chinese language. This program is available to local Pakistani workers and students. Already, 40 employees and 60 students from various backgrounds have signed up for this program, indicating a favorable response. Together, the two nations are collaborating on a variety of projects to remove obstacles in the way of seamless advancement, including science, technology, and language (Shanghai Electric, 2022). Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute is one of these institutions in Gwadar that offers technical training and job-related skills to Pakistani youngsters. In order to provide the young people of Baluchistan with the best specialized training and skills, this institution has been outfitted with cutting edge technology. Youngsters who receive training and education here are eligible for free housing, scholarships, and a direct work opportunity in the Gwadar port, which offers many chances (Hadi, 2018).

To foster greater cooperation between higher education institutions in the two nations, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and the China Association of Higher Education jointly established the China-Pakistan Higher Education Research Institute during the "4th Exchange Mechanism Conference of CPEC Consortium of Universities." This will encompass a variety of industries, including the sciences, economy, agriculture, education, and socioeconomic development (The News, 2021). To bring the two nations closer together academically, scholarships will be given to students from both nations. With the aid of this partnership, university-level teacher and student exchanges will boost interdisciplinary research collaboration (Tsui, 2017). People will get more familiar with one another's cultures, way of life, and social mores as a result of this. Therefore, more can be explored in the domain of education sector form the institutional framework of CPEC agreed upon by China and Pakistan.

1.2. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to evaluate the Sino-Pak collaboration in the education sector for boosting education department in Pakistan under the institutional framework of CPEC.

The research has the following objectives:

- To analyze the educational cooperation of Pakistan and China under the institutional framework of CPEC
- To determine the prospects for the educational cooperation between China and Pakistan
- To evaluate the challenges hampering the cooperation between the two countries in the education sector

2. Literature Review

Pakistan's economic development depends on education. The Pakistani educational system is organized into three stages, with postgraduate and tertiary education as the highest level, secondary and higher secondary education as the second level, and primary and secondary education as the lowest level. The mandatory exams for grades 9 through 12 are administered by the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), which is unique to each division. These boards are dispersed around the nation and are separate educational Organizations (Burki, 2019). The professional development of teachers is a key component of educational policy documents in third world countries, and these countries are tackling these challenges as well. More than 70% of Pakistan's population lives in villages, although there is scarcely any evidence that educational trends, such as modernizing and making education more practical, have any bearing on the country's rural areas (Burki, 2019).

It is therefore important to complete the educational criteria of a gigantic project that we have connected our dreams and desires to and say would be our savior in a difficult financial condition. It is already known that we need to be educated in order to advance in the current world. Our greatest benefit comes from placing the correct priority on education. We must create an environment that encourages investment in our nation if we are to lessen the burden of economic pressures. The level of education people obtain will have a significant impact on how well the labor force, management, and the majority of institutions operate. It is a significant factor in determining the investment climate (Burki, 2019). It must be realized that all kinds of local and international businesses are more eager to provide financing when they are confident they can recruit the skilled labor force needed to maximize the return on their investment.

CPEC is said to significantly raise the level of living for the average citizen. They have learned that the Pakistani populace does not want CPEC to raise educational standards in that country. Our results demonstrated unexpected effects in the setting of high-quality education. Contrarily, CPEC hasn't started any educational initiatives yet and has never offered any feedback on how well education is going (Rizvi, 2014). These theories therefore reveal what seem to be insignificant academic discoveries. Also, a significant number of Pakistanis study in Chinese universities, but they do not think that the CPEC is giving Pakistan's educational system enough attention. In order to increase the amount of jobs available in Pakistan's local communities, this study looked at how people's opinions of the significant job opportunities brought on by CPEC development. Also, the CPEC is a big initiative that has received widespread support from millions of people, has generated 20 million jobs across several industries, and will make it simpler for residents to find employment while also assisting them in escaping poverty and dependency on social assistance. In general, the CPEC is an effective plan for long-term economic expansion (Kayani, 2017).

Our educational system needs to be connected to current development and changes in order to be effective today. Education officials must update the curricula and resources offered at our educational institutions if we are to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the CPEC. Long-term improvements in their working relationships will result from education's ability to achieve the cultural and social cohesion goals between both partners. Pakistan's educational system will gain from the CPEC; numerous training facilities are being created in Gwadar, and plans call for opening universities along the route to bring China and Pakistan closer together (Bano, 2022).

Major economic issues that Pakistan has experienced include high unemployment, a lack of resources for education, and other social limitations. Yet, as a result of the economic corridor, which benefits both nations over the long run, Pakistan anticipates a significant increase in employment as several opportunities in the energy, industrial, health, and educational sectors become available (Irshad, 2015). On the other hand, China is establishing trade channels

through Pakistan and expanding economic chances in order to find significant trading opportunities on the world market. While the project is underway, it also intends to work on Pakistan's youth and their professional development. Their top priority is the establishment of universities offering professional education and partnerships with various education institutes. They also intend to facilitate research institutes, provide international education platforms to the youth by assisting them in studying abroad, and plan the same for Chinese students to study in Pakistan. In order to broaden Pakistan's educational standards, China also intends to deploy academics and research professors there. Scholars from the two nations collaborate on projects at various research levels (Ullah, 2020). China has made scholarship announcements for Pakistani students and welcomes them to study there. Pakistan's literacy rate is rising as a result of this act of kindness.

The current study looked into how CPEC in Pakistan affected schooling. The findings demonstrated that Pakistan's educational system will take on new dimensions thanks to the CPEC and SEZs' brand-new road map of modernization, technology, and development. The outcomes emphasize once more how the proximity of SEZs to educational centers and the prompt influx of labor into these SEZs will determine Pakistani students' future course of action. In order to achieve our goals via hard work and morality, education is a process that begins by developing our moralities, consciousness, positive attitudes, and behaviors (Uddin, 2020). There are no shortcuts; there is just hard labor and forward motion. Hence, regardless of the position he has, a strong student with morals and character will benefit the country.

Even though time hasn't passed, we can still act to address the CPEC program's shortcomings. Even if we begin right away and do in-depth analysis in each of the areas mentioned above, our growth of human resources in those areas will benefit our kids so much that they will control our future rather than the youth of China.

Also, it is true that providing young people with greater educational opportunities leads to stronger economic growth and higher GDP in Pakistan. Since economic growth is the foundation of the nation's progress, it must be prioritized in order to significantly lower Pakistan's poverty rate. For the purpose of reducing poverty and boosting growth, the socioeconomic development sector and the education sector must be prioritized. Less investment from multinational organizations during the past few years has had a negative influence on the economy and education due to political unrest and law-and-order difficulties. As education is the most important factor in Pakistan's economic growth, CPEC is now offering the chance to invest in it (Uddin, 2020).

In Pakistan, villages are home to over 70% of the people. The educational boards that oversee tests in Pakistan's cities are pressuring teachers to attend additional training sessions, and the current faculty is being urged to receive instruction in using materials of a high international grade so that they can be used in institutions. In Pakistan, however, the proportion of institutions in rural areas is much lower than in metropolitan ones. Both in urban and rural areas, the educational system needs to be upgraded and made more useful. We need to be fully outfitted with the newest technology that satisfies global expectations in order to get the most out of the support in economic development. The goals of CPEC are to build highways connecting cities and towns, create routes that connect disconnected rural areas, facilitate travel, and—most importantly—found institutions in Pakistan that will offer higher education and postgraduate degrees. In order to execute contemporary education in Pakistan over the next few years and increase the country's literacy rate, research think-tanks, development laboratories, and training facilities that can house international faculty and scholars are required.

The only means through which Pakistan's economy may be strengthened is through education. Only when human resources have received the appropriate training is it feasible. The rate of economic growth is affected by the population growth ratio. Although spending

between \$62 billion and \$64 billion (and rising) to promote education, there is still a long way to go until the desired result is achieved. The CPEC is seen as a "Tool of Prosperity" for Pakistan, and the only way to achieve prosperity and economic progress is to fund education. Pakistan has already established a partnership with CPEC and will continue to do so. It is said that in order to thrive economically, a nation must work hard to improve its educational prospects (Uddin, 2020). The secret to Pakistan's success is to see a thriving nation with consistent economic progress.

Under the PC-1 dubbed "Academic Cooperation under CPEC Consortium of Universities," HEC Pakistan is creating six China study centers. to advance knowledge via research and development. UET Lahore will host the construction of the first such facility. The primary goals of these facilities are to advance Chinese culture, demonstrate how quickly China has developed, and teach visitors how the nation and its political system function. Via a competitive selection procedure, these centers will collaborate on a wide range of cooperative projects, including joint research projects, training and talent development, joint conferences, seminars, and workshops (Authority, 2022). In collaboration with Chinese universities, at least 100 students will receive training, and at least three books about CPEC and China will be published so that the students may learn about Chinese scientific advancements and culture.

3. Methodology

A research methodology is a set of all the processes and methods that are used in a research process. It consists of research method, research design, data collection methods and the methods for the evaluation of such data.

3.1. Research Method

There are two major types of research methods such as Quantitative and Qualitative research methods. Quantitative research method is a type of research method which is used for the confirmation of a research hypothesis that whether a certain phenomenon occurs or not while on the other hand, the qualitative research method is used to describe how a phenomenon is occurring and why that takes place. In this research process, the qualitative research method is employed. Qualitative research method is used to determine how China and Pakistan are collaborating for promoting the education sector in Pakistan and how the institutional framework of the CPEC is employed by the two countries for boosting the education sector in Pakistan. Similarly, the challenges and prospects for gaining the yield from the institutional framework will also be determined by qualitative analysis.

3.2. Research Design

In this research paper, the secondary research process is employed. Utilizing data that has proactively been gotten by someone else for one's own objectives is known as auxiliary information examination. Scientists utilize optional information examination to take a gander at an alternate point on an earlier report's unique exploration theme or to attempt to track down a solution to another one (Stewart, 1993).

3.3. Data Collection Method

Secondary data is collected in this research process. It's crucial to become familiar with the distinction between primary and secondary data in order to comprehend secondary data analysis thoroughly. Primary data are unique facts that scientists gather with a specific objective in mind. As opposed to primary data, secondary data is gathered for a different reason than its intended application. Cost viability is one of the clearest advantages of embracing optional information investigation. The scientist needs to spends no cash, time, or exertion on the information gathering periods of their review since those have proactively been finished. While it is sporadically important for specialists to buy optional information to use it as the reason for a review they are dealing with, these expenses are typically

consistently lower than what they would be on the off chance that the scientist were to foster the indistinguishable information assortment without any preparation (Stewart, 1993). Likewise, the information from an optional information assortment is in many cases previously scrubbed and saved in an electronic configuration, liberating the specialist to invest energy diving in and doing the examination.

3.4. Data evaluation

For the evaluation of data, content analysis method is employed. In this method, all the data obtained from the research process is first organized and then the content of such data is critically analyzed. China and Pakistan are collaborating in several educational programs.

The infrastructural development and the framework of CPEC will help Pakistan to boost its educational segments but there are several opportunities and challenges for the utilization of this institutional framework which are explored through the content analysis method.

4. Findings and Analysis

After the analysis of the content of secondary data, the prospects and challenges for collaboration in the education sector are as follows:

Prospects for China and Pakistan's collaboration in the educational sector by institutional framework

There are a ton of prospective chances being created by CPEC in several sectors. Industries will generate a large number of jobs, and projects related to development, such as plans for the development of the railway system and the power sector, as well as initiatives to improve human resources through education and other forms of training, have already been started to meet upcoming needs (Afridi, 2019). For instance, more than \$11 billion is being invested in Pakistan's energy and power generation sector, oil and gas industries, health care, and upgrading of current infrastructure, such as development of new roads and railway network is in progress to upgrade existing trade routes in addition to new initiatives.

Chinese universities offer a safe atmosphere for Pakistani students studying there, as well as assistance in finding better job possibilities. Men and women are treated equally in China, with similar respect, values, and opportunities in both the educational and professional spheres. There is no gender discrimination or inequality. Students in China are able to adapt to new circumstances with ease, which makes their stay convenient while they are studying. In comparison to other nations, Pakistan has always lagged behind in the education sector, particularly when it comes to science and technology, whereas China is primarily focusing on them, including education, and is facilitating intellectual exchange.

We will require instructors/teachers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to work and improve this sector in small towns while we debate the development and expansion of Pakistan's education system through CPEC. As it stands, there are less options for schools, colleges, and universities in these places, thus it is necessary to staff them with knowledgeable and reputable faculty in order to match the requirements of international education. Pakistan must keep an eye on all initiatives as they are carried out as part of the CPEC project. In order to attain their aims, Pakistan's youth are being carefully directed towards education, and the government of Pakistan is moving in the right path with more interest. It is clear that we lack the number and caliber of institutions necessary to generate educated resources. We need to develop the youth's skills while also setting higher criteria so that they may accomplish the necessary tasks for Pakistan's future improvement.

4.1. Challenges in the way of complete utilization of institutional framework of CPEC

Since Urdu and English are the two most broadly communicated in dialects in the country — Urdu is the authority language of government and English is the language of business — the

effect of CPEC is impacted by language, which presents obstructions. Due to cultural and historical differences between the two nations, there may be resistance to accepting one another (Tadesse, 2020). After independence, the old system can fight the new one because it was affected by the British leftovers and used in the education system. However, the government gave less attention to the country's education needs, which were met in the same manner, so that the old system, which the country also employed, would be able to oppose the new one. The opposition to change must be overcome because it takes time for individuals to comprehend and adjust to it.

Resistance from strict associations in the country, particularly in rustic schools, got the awful impacts of strict gatherings; this sporadically makes obstructions for female training as well with respect to training in general. The War against Terrorism has an impact on both terrorism and efforts to promote reading. In Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Federally Administered Tribal Areas, terrorist assaults against schools, colleges, and students resulted in the destruction of a number of educational facilities (FATA). The education system in Pakistan was impacted by its participation in the fight against terrorism. Although it might not have to contribute as much as other elements, this is still a significant factor.

The Pakistani schooling system is split among public and non-public school frameworks, with state funded schools falling under the service of training. This has prompted obstruction from the private schooling framework. At the point when state funded schools redesign their authoritative construction and schooling system, these confidential associations battle against the change for their own personal circumstance. From one viewpoint, these schools need instructive offices and a compelling learning climate for the understudies. Then again, tuition-based schools show to various confidential associations offer excellent training in return for high expenses.

5. Conclusion

The megaproject CPEC has both immediate and long-term socioeconomic repercussions for the expansion of the national economy. This game changer can succeed if there is a constant influx of human capital. Education should be modified in accordance with the project's requirements because it is a crucial component of human capital. Redesigning the engineering university curricula (civil, mechanical, electrical) as well as other academic programs like business administration, architecture, etc. In order to achieve our goals via hard work and morality, education is a process that begins by developing our moralities, consciousness, positive attitudes, and behaviors. There are no shortcuts; there is just hard labor and forward motion. A student who is physically fit and has moral principles will benefit the country regardless of the position he holds. Despite the fact that time has not elapsed, we might in any case make a move to address the deficiencies of the CPEC program on our end. Regardless of whether we start immediately and direct top to bottom examination in every one of the areas referenced over, the human asset advancement for those points, businesses, and disciplines will help our children so extraordinarily that our future will be guaranteed.

5.1. Recommendations for pragmatic and sustainable collaboration

Governments at all levels should devote at least 4% of their annual budget to higher education. This budget should allocate a significant percentage to applied/market-based research and innovation. Here, it is important to note that such funding allocations shouldn't be restricted to universities in the public sector alone, but should also be made available to and encouraged to be used by universities in the private sector. Universities should be encouraged to file patents and to make money from those patents, as this will enable them to fund themselves. A significant portion of the assessment score should be allocated to patents, innovation, and skill development in order to ensure the culture of patents.

Modern vocational training facilities ought to be provided by the government. The curricula

at vocational training facilities ought to be updated in light of this. Chinese instructors and trainers should be hired, or appropriate MOUs should be made between universities and vocational schools based on reciprocity. In this case, the efforts of the Pakistan Engineering Council to sign the Washington Accord are worth emphasizing.

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